BULLETIN No. 29. (B. A. I. 165.)

U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE,
BUREAU OF ANIMAL INDUSTRY.
D. E. SALMON, D. V. M., Chief.

AMERICAN BREEDS OF FOWLS.

I.—THE PLYMOUTH ROCK.

BY

T. F. McGREW.

1862 1889

WASHINGTON:
GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE.
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LETTER OF TRANSMITTAL.

U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE,
BUREAU OF ANIMAL INDUSTRY,
Washington, D. C., June 1, 1901.

SIR: I have the honor to transmit herewith for publication a bulletin on Plymouth Rock fowls, being the first part of a report on American breeds of fowls.

The Plymouth Rock breed is the most popular creation of the American fancier's art. It is not only a beautiful bird, but as a general-purpose fowl it is unsurpassed. It is medium in size, excellent for the table, a good sitter, and at the same time rivals the smaller breeds in activity, hardiness, and egg-laying propensities. It is a favorite breed for the production of broilers and capons, and in the show room it excites the admiration and enthusiasm of all who love to see beauty and symmetry in our domesticated birds.

Nearly everyone is more or less familiar with the general appearance of the Barred Plymouth Rock, but there are comparatively few who understand the different points of these birds, the defects which the farmer tries to avoid, and the ideals of perfection toward which he is striving. The plumage of birds has an even greater effect in the characterization of breeds than have the coats of other farm animals, and hence the breeder pays special attention to the body color and the markings of the feathers on different parts of the body. Those who are strictly utilitarian in their aims may think that too much attention is paid to the feathering; but it should be remembered that the perfection of feathering and the ability to transmit this standard is an evidence of pure breeding and prepotency. Nor should the æsthetic element in the breeding of farm animals be entirely discarded. Beauty of form and beauty of coloring, bred according to a standard of perfection and developed almost to the exact ideals of that standard, serve to excite interest and enthusiasm beyond what can be realized by utilitarian qualities alone.

Considerable attention is properly given by the author of the bulletin to the plumage, the standard requirements, and the methods of breeding by which these are best secured. These are the points upon which information is perhaps most needed. The Buff and the White Rocks receive their due share of attention. Mr. T. F. McGrew, who has prepared the bulletin, is a well-known judge of poultry and a prolific writer on questions relating to breeds and breeding. The illustrations were made by Mr. George E. Howard, and have received the approval of some of the most skillful breeders of these birds.

The time has come when Americans no longer need to go abroad to obtain either beauty or productiveness in fowls. The best breeds that exist have been produced in our own land, and when their merits are fully understood there will be an increasing demand for them in other parts of the world.

Respectfully,
D. E. SALMON,
Chief of Bureau.

HON. JAMES WILSON,
Secretary of Agriculture.

CONTENTS.

Page.
Introduction 5
  Family comb distinction 5
  The utility value of the American class 7
  The American Dominique (illustrated) 7
  Single-comb family 8
  The Java fowl (illustrated) 9
The Plymouth Rock 10
  Origin of the Plymouth Rock 11
  Plymouth Rock shape 12
  A few points concerning the female 14
The Barred variety (illustrated) 15
  Proper barring 17
  Underbarring 19
  Matings 20
  The single matings 21
  The double mating 21
  Double mating for cockerels 22
  General demands 22
White Plymouth Rocks (illustrated) 23
  Their origin 23
  Color conditions 24
  Proper matings 24
  White as a color 24
Buff Plymouth Rocks (illustrated) 25
  Buff color and how produced 26
  Faults to avoid 27
The Pea-Combed variety (illustrated) 28
Breeds allied to the Plymouth Rocks (illustrated) 29
  The Jersey Blue 29
  The Rhode Island Red 31

ILLUSTRATIONS.

Page.
PLATE I. Barred Plymouth Rock male 12
II. Barred Plymouth Rock female 12
III. White Plymouth Rock male 20
IV. White Plymouth Rock female 20
V. Buff Plymouth Rock male 24
VI. Buff Plymouth Rock female 24
FIG. 1. American Dominique male 6
2. Head of American Dominique male 7
3. Black Javas 9
4. Head of Barred Plymouth Rock male 16
5. Head of Barred Plymouth Rock female 17
6. Feathers of Barred Plymouth Rock male 18
7. Feathers of Barred Plymouth Rock female 19
8. Head of Pea-Comb Barred Plymouth Rock male 28
9. Feathers of Jersey Blue male 30
10. Feathers of Jersey Blue female 31

AMERICAN BREEDS OF FOWLS.

THE PLYMOUTH ROCK.

INTRODUCTION.

The introduction of the Asiatic-bred fowls into the New World had great influence for good among our so-called domestic fowls. The Shanghai or original Cochin, and also the gray Asiatic fowl that was the original foundation stock from which our Brahmas were formed, brought increased size and better egg production, and their use as a cross upon our barnyard fowls created a desire for more and better poultry of true breeding.

In the efforts put forth for the advancement of quality in our farm-bred stock use was made, without any concerted understanding, of all the breeds that came to us from other countries. These new and highly esteemed fowls were mixed promiscuously with our home-bred fowls, the result of which gave us the foundation for all of our so-called American breeds. The original foundation stock that has been developed into our Plymouth Rock fowl came from an experimental cross of two birds that were united on account of their egg-producing qualities. The start of what came to be known as Jersey Blues and Rhode Island Reds began under like conditions.

The Brahma was the first breed of fowls that was credited to us as an American production; and, while they are classed as an Asiatic fowl, they are the outcome of great skill in handling the very crude original by our American fanciers, who have given over fifty years of attention to perfecting them. While Americans are given credit the world over for originating the Brahmas, these birds are grouped in our standard of perfection as belonging to the Asiatic class.

In the formation of the breed classes in the American standard of perfection all breeds and their subvarieties that have been made in this country by crossing and by the improvement of other crosses are classed as belonging to the American breeds, or families. These comprise the Plymouth Rock, Wyandotte, Java, and Dominique. They are the acknowledged breeds of our standard, belonging to what are known as the American classes.

FAMILY COMB DISTINCTION.

The fowls of the American classes have their distinct style of combs, which is an emblem of family difference. The comb is so marked as to become the guide for the uninformed in selecting the families one from another. The Dominique is known as the Rose Comb Dominique, from the fact that it has the so-called double, or rose, comb. It is a low, thick comb, the upper surface of which is covered with small points, the rear end of which comes to a point called a spike. This spike in the Dominiques should be elevated at the end.

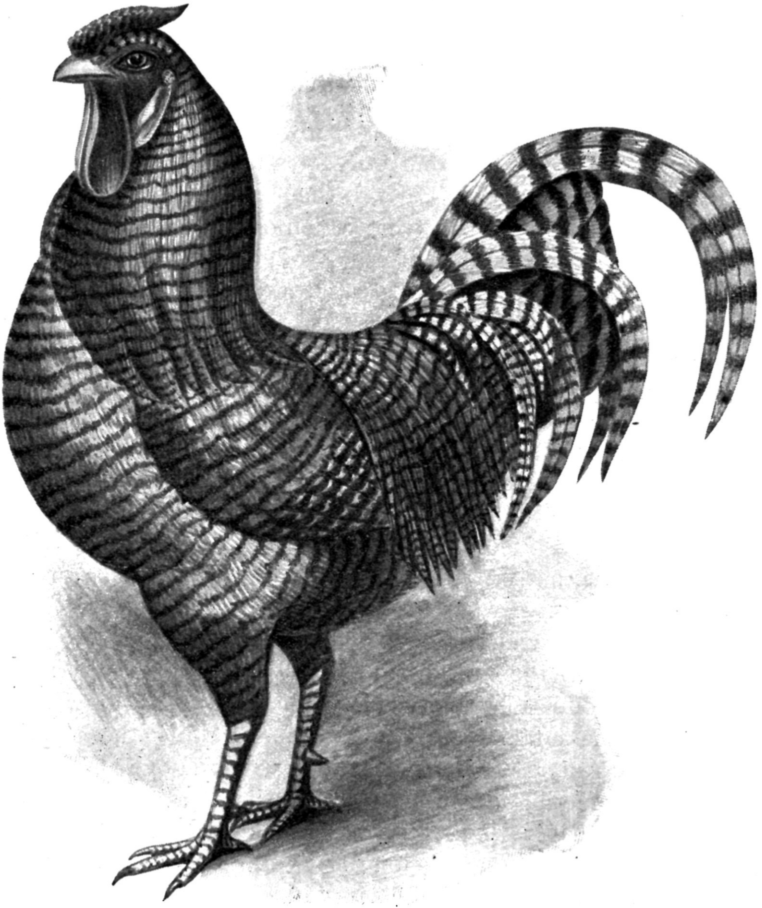


FIG. 1.—American Dominique male.

The Wyandotte also has the rose comb, but it is of a smaller pattern than the comb of the Dominique, and the end or spike turns down to follow the shape of the head; the points on top of comb are not so prominent, nor is the spike so long as is proper for the Dominique. The Plymouth Rock and Java have what is known as the single comb, which is upright and nicely serrated. The combs are so distinctly different as to be easily recognized.

THE UTILITY VALUE OF THE AMERICAN CLASS.

The American breeds are often termed the "general-purpose fowl," from the fact that when young they make the best of broilers and when matured a most perfect roaster. Their natural formation, inviting plumpness, makes them the desirable market poultry. In addition to all this they have the beautiful yellow skin so much sought after by our people; they are of quick growth as compared with other good-sized fowls, and as egg producers they average nearly the equal of any other breed; they lay a medium-sized brown egg of the very best quality; they are easily kept in good condition, and are among our best winter layers; they are very vigorous and hardy and able to withstand our most changeable climate with as little inconvenience as any known fowl.

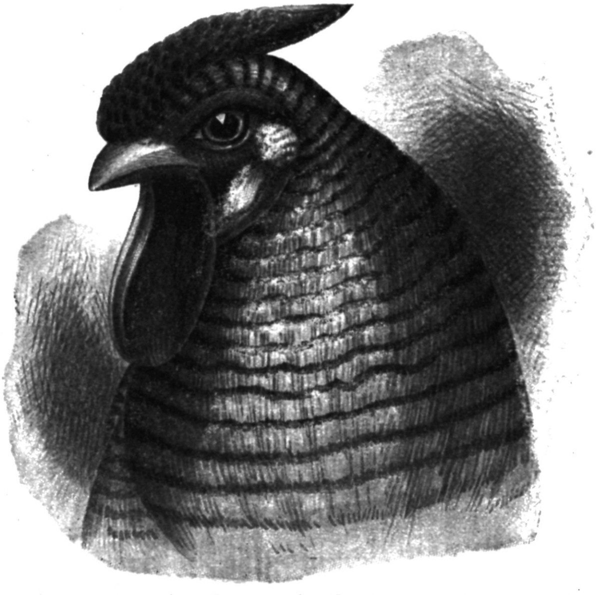


FIG. 2.—Head of American Dominique male.

The Rose Comb varieties are least liable to injury by the extreme cold of our Northern climate. At the same time the medium-sized combs of the other varieties are not so large as to be frosted when properly housed, as all poultry should be during the cold months of winter.

THE AMERICAN DOMINIQUE.

The American Dominique was well known in early days throughout New Jersey and eastern New York as a fowl of great merit as an egg producer. The eggs of this fowl graded A1 in the New York market, and as table poultry it had no superior. At that time the plumage was of a light-gray color, barred across with a darker shade; it had both the single and double comb, and the shanks and feet were yellow in color. It is claimed for this variety that it was brought to this country by both the French and the Dutch. This is of but little importance, for such birds might be produced at will.

The Dominique color is a combination of black and white. It comes as one of the results of crossing black and white fowls. The mottling of the Java and Houdan and the Ancora are other results of the same methods of mating pure black and pure white fowls together. When the poultryman of the past began selecting the Dominique for improving into a breed that would reproduce itself he preferred birds with the rose comb, the full sweeping tail, and the light-gray ground color barred with the bluish gray. In order that we may have a better conception of the top cross that produced our Plymouth Rocks, the American Dominique as seen in its prime will be described.

The general appearance of the American Dominique was not unlike our present large-sized Brown Leghorns. They were somewhat fuller in breast and deeper in abdomen. The female had a slight inclination toward both fluff and cushion formation; main tail feathers like our present Leghorns, only not quite so extended; breast full and carried rather forward, the male being quite like a large Brown Leghorn male in shape, with a tail almost as full as seen on the Hamburg. Their combs were rather larger than the Hamburg comb, but of the same form, type, and carriage, the rear end, or spike, turned upward, quite unlike the Wyandotte comb, which follows the shape of the head. They had a neck that was arched and covered with very full hackle plumage. Back broad and medium in length; in color and barring quite like an inferiorly marked Barred Plymouth Rock of the lighter shade of color. Such was the general make-up of the Rose Comb American Dominique.

SINGLE-COMB FAMILY.

When we consider our American made or adopted breeds some must be mentioned that are not included in the list of so-called "Standard fowls." Some of them must be considered because they were used in creating a portion of our standard varieties, while others have had a position among our standard breeds, but have become obsolete from lack of admirers. At this time those only will be noted which belong to the single-comb family, for they alone will conform to the demands of our Plymouth Rocks. The Rose Comb Dominique has been described first, the object being to keep it entirely separate from the single-comb fowls.

The single-comb fowls which belong to the American classes are these: The Java, the Plymouth Rock, the Jersey Blue, and the Rhode Island Red. All of these are classed as truly American—the Java by adoption and improvement, the others the result of crosses.

THE JAVA FOWL.

From all information obtained we learn that the early Java (which formed one-half of the original cross which produced the Plymouth Rock) was of Asiatic blood. The illustrations of what were then called the "Great Java" are quite similar to the illustrations of primitive Cochin China fowls, and these, combined with the written description of the Java fowl, point conclusively to Asiatic origin. The importations of these fowls were named after the ports from which they came; thus the same breed came to us under several names.

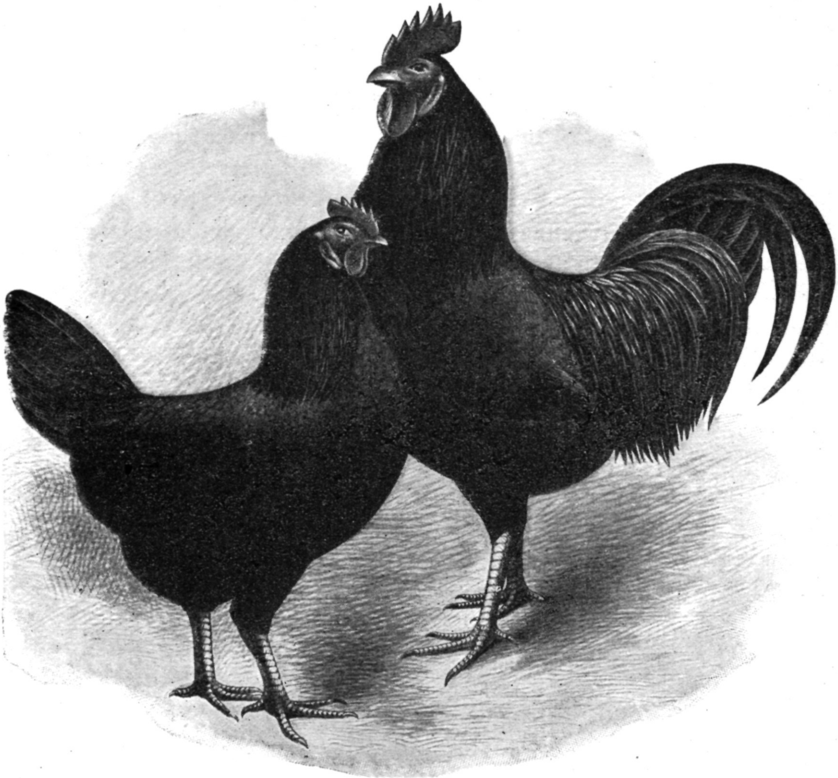


FIG. 3.—Black Javas.

The Java is described as a large black fowl with single comb and smooth legs, weighing from 18 to 20 pounds per pair. They are spoken of as being among the most valued fowls of the day, and their prolificacy in eggs suggested union with the Dominique, in the hope of gaining a better egg producer than either. Those who made the cross did so without a proper consideration of the result. Both of these breeds had already the highest reputation in this respect, and those who knew their valuable qualities exchanged stock, hoping that by intermingling the new blood they would gain an increased precocity in future stock.

Javas, as we now find them, are simply an improved or modified type of the original. Their general make-up is a long, broad, and deep body. They are the longest in back and body of any of our American breeds. As of Standard formation, they represent the most extended type, the Wyandotte filling the position of compactness, the Plymouth Rock the middle position—giving us three distinct formations. When we bear in mind that the Java type calls for the long back and body, no cushion, and but little inclination toward fluff, full tail and sickle feathers, we have before us the cause of many faults that are continually cropping out in our Plymouth Rocks. Much trouble and delay could be avoided were due consideration given to ancestral conditions when contemplating improvement.

THE PLYMOUTH ROCK.

When first produced no other name was needed; they were simply the Plymouth Rock fowls, and became well known under this title the world over. No other fowl has ever enjoyed equal popularity in this country, and we presume they are better known, and at the same time less understood, than any other fowl of minor reputation. More has been written about them than could be read in years, and there have been almost as many opinions and theories placed before us as there are writers. This has caused considerable confusion, until the alarm sounded ascribing retrogression to the breed, when the attention of those best able to cope with the difficulty became attracted, and marked improvement soon followed.

There seems to be no condition, surrounding, or climate unfavorable to the Plymouth Rocks. Their constitutional vigor appears to have no limit. Where any fowl can live they will prosper. They stand confinement, and when allowed freedom prove excellent foragers. They are prolific in yielding medium-sized brown eggs of the richest flavor. Under all conditions they will produce fully as many eggs as any thoroughbred fowl. Below is given their record in competition with others, from which it will be seen where they stand in comparison:

Yearly contest and calculated egg yield.

Breeds.	Tests reported.	Eggs laid in contest.	Average yield.	Weight per dozen.
	Number.	*Number.*	*Number.*	*Ounces.*
Barred Plymouth Rocks	262	173	150	23
White Plymouth Rocks	289	164	150	23
Single-Comb Brown Leghorns	277	157	160	19
Single-Comb Buff Leghorns	....	183	160	19
Silver-Laced Wyandottes	....	113	150	21
White Wyandottes	....	176	150	21
Rhode Island Reds	....	166	150	21
Crossbred pullets	....	129	....	....

The first column gives the figures reported from a test under very high feeding and best possible attention. The second gives the figures obtained in selecting from over fifty lots, all reported monthly for a year. In the third column are presented the figures arrived at by calculation and accepted as nearly correct, as results that can be obtained under the best management.

This table records the egg yield of the different lots of fowls entered for competition in annual test, conducted by persons who have had to rely upon the statements of those owning and entering the fowls; and while we naturally hesitate to claim knowledge of their authenticity, at the same time the studious attention bestowed upon the work should assure us that the above figures are a fair average for the fowls competing.

ORIGIN OF THE PLYMOUTH ROCK.

The first fowl to bear this name was created by intermingling Cochin, Dorking, and Malay blood, the result of which was a mongrel of little real value. The knowledge of this inferiority brought an influence against what was to be the most popular breed ever produced. This we know from the fact that when the present Barred Plymouth Rock was first announced those best informed believed it to be the same as before, under other guidance.

Our present type of Plymouth Rocks is the outcome of careful handling of fowls secured from crosses made on the same lines as those reported to have been made in Connecticut almost sixty years ago, where they mated Rose-Comb American Dominique males with Single-Comb Black Java females. These same crosses, also others of like character, are claimed to have been made by persons who had obtained much the same results, but the Rev. H. S. Ramsdell, residing in Connecticut at the time, gives the name Woodstock as the town of their origin, and persons interested he names as Giles, Clark, Thayer, Spaulding, and himself. While this removes all doubt of the origin of this one strain of Plymouth Rocks, it can not detract any credit that may be due to the Messrs. Upham, Pitman, Felch, and others for the part they took in originating this type. However, be this as it may, the real point of interest is, How were they originated and advanced to their present position among high-class, standard-bred fowls?

There can be no reasonable doubt as to the make-up of the original cross having been as stated above, the product of which was grizzled gray and speckled. They were not of solid color, neither were they barred like the Dominique. In size and form they resembled the Java, while their color bespoke the influence of the sire. Those having the best color and single comb among those produced were selected and bred together as the real start of the present perfect fowl. Many subcrosses have since been made, some of which, it may be almost positively recorded, were the Cochin, Dorking, and Brahma, all of which had a tendency for future trouble for those who attempted to produce high-class Plymouth Rocks.

PLYMOUTH ROCK SHAPE.

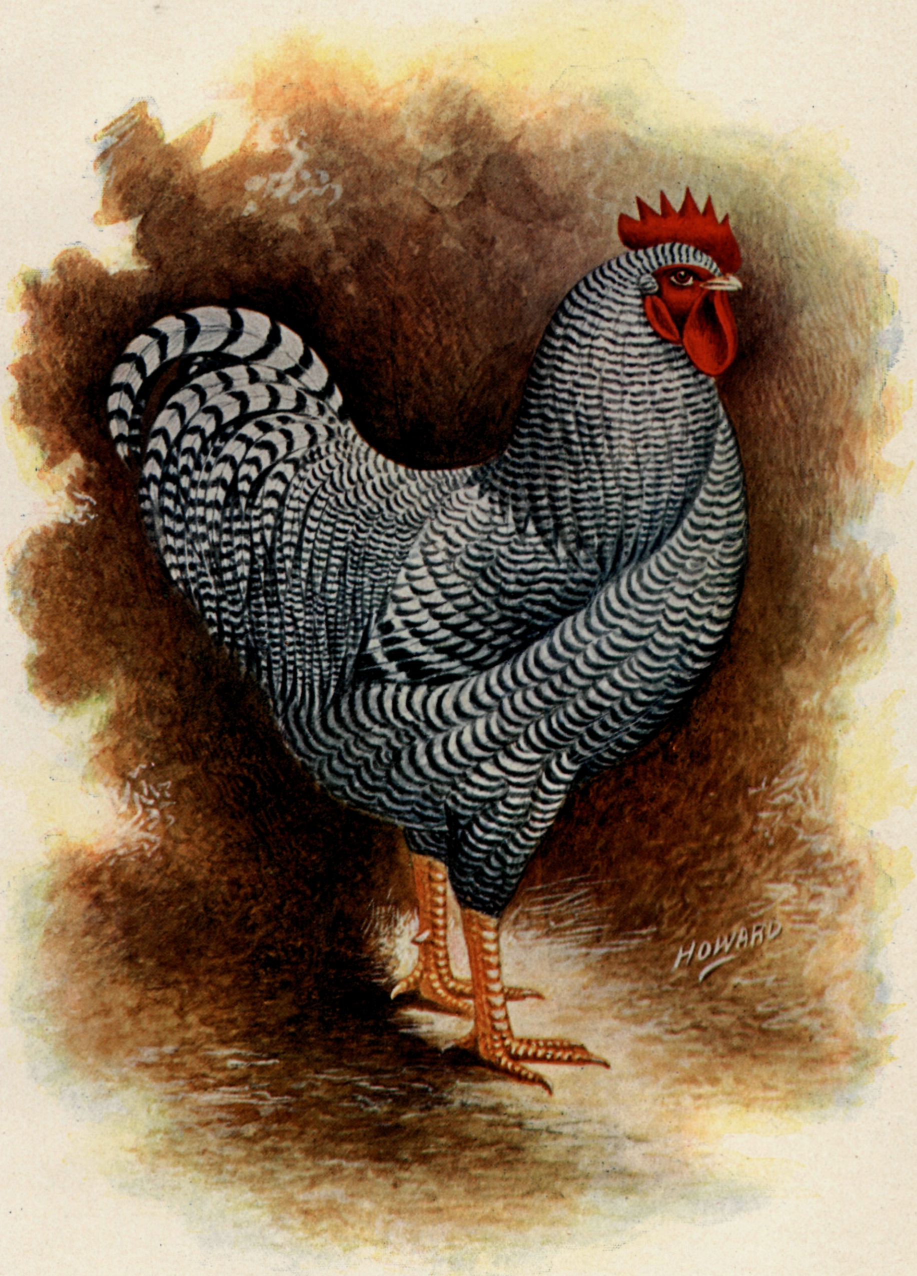
No matter what variety of color they be, the form or shape of all must be the same. The presence of what are known as breed characteristics must be so strong as to stamp them with the unmistakable emblem "Plymouth Rock shape." The importance of this is shown in the fact that some persons can select a White Plymouth Rock from a White Wyandotte only by the difference in comb. This is the outcome of not demanding greater attention to type in the show room, where size, color, and comb are given more credit than is due and too little to the breed emblem—shape.

An effort is here made to make plain the proper shape of a Plymouth Rock and all sections, including head and its belongings, are described as minutely as possible, omitting reference to color, which will be taken up separately.

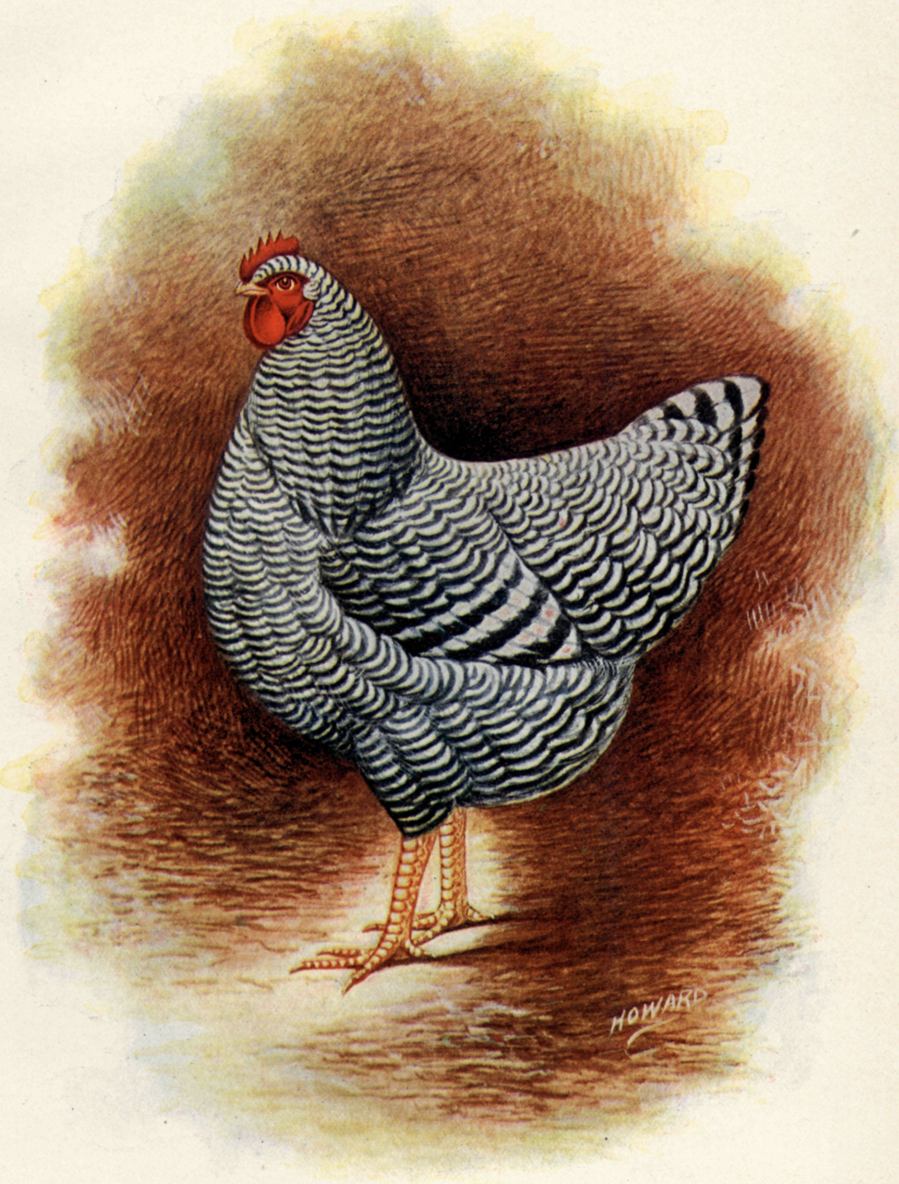
The head of the male should be medium size, rather round when viewed from the side, fairly prominent in front, back short and stout and nicely curved. The comb single, rather below medium, never large or coarse, but of proper size to give a finished, neat appearance in conformity with size of the specimen; it should be straight, upright, and free from all defects, a perfectly even surface throughout. The serrations must be regular and in uniform proportion, grading fore and aft from the center, where they are largest. The rule is five serrations. The points of the comb must be even and regular. The comb, from the front, where it rests on the beak, should curve gracefully back, finishing with a nicely shaped heel, just forward of the juncture with the head and neck. It should form a half oval over the head, being highest in the center, gently declining either way, neither high in front nor in rear. A twisted, uneven, or thumb-marked comb is much despised; a perfectly formed comb, the crowning effect. A long head or beak is quite improper and should not be tolerated; it destroys the whole appearance of an otherwise handsome specimen.

Wattles should be moderate in size and nicely rounded and of even size and fine texture. When ill shaped or uneven they are a deformity. Ear lobes should be neat, fine, and of equal size, nicely placed on the face below and in the rear of the eyes. A nice, prominent pair of wattles and ear lobes, if of good shape and texture, add much to the appearance of the head.

Eyes should be round, large, bright, and red in color. In the Standard the color is called a clear, rich bay. Weak-colored or pearl eyes are almost a deformity. They look bad, and, in addition to their ill appearance, indicate poor breeding or delicate constitution. The eyes of a strong, vigorous specimen are usually very bright and striking in appearance.



BARRED PLYMOUTH ROCK MALE.



BARRED PLYMOUTH ROCK FEMALE.

A narrow or thin neck on a Plymouth Rock looks very bad. An abundance of plumage forms a full neck where it rests on the shoulders, the neck tapering gradually to the junction of the head. The strong full appearance makes the neck seem shorter than it really is, while a thin, narrow neck looks to be twice the length demanded. A well-proportioned neck, nicely arched from just back of the comb to the body, is the neck required for the well-proportioned specimen.

The back of the Plymouth Rock is one of its most important belongings. We quote in full the Standard description: "Broad, of medium length, and rising with a slight concave sweep of the tail; saddle feathers of medium length and abundant." This description calls for about the same style of back as is mentioned for the Brahma. Note that the Plymouth Rock back is fashioned after that of the Brahma, the Wyandotte back resembling that of the Cochin. No cushion is called for in the Plymouth Rock, while for the Wyandotte male a broad, full saddle is required, the female being slightly cushioned. If these distinctions of back were strictly adhered to, the Plymouth Rock form would be more distinctive.

The broad back of medium length (medium as between the long back of the Java and the short back of the Wyandotte) is essential. Nothing short of this description fills the Standard demand, and a demand of so much importance should be most strictly adhered to. If this description were well understood, and followed to the letter, much of the present confusion as to type would disappear.

Tail formation is quite a factor in the proper finish of back. If the main tail feathers are strong and fairly well spread, they help to build up the back to the proper ending, in accordance with the Standard; but when these feathers are contracted or narrow, they allow the saddle plumage to gather and form the narrow or pinched appearance instead of the proper sweep to the tail. They also spoil the shape of the tail itself, giving a tapering appearance from the shoulders back.

The tail of the Plymouth Rock, in formation and finish, resembles somewhat the tail of the Brahma. The carriage of each is about the same and the sickle feathers and coverts are fashioned much on the same lines. Therefore, when it is stated that the Plymouth Rock back, including the tail, is fashioned after the Brahma, it is hoped that the proper formation of each in accordance with the Standard is properly understood as the meaning. This positively prohibits the Cochin form of back for either.

The under portion of the Plymouth Rock, including breast, under part of body, abdomen, and legs, is of equal importance. The broad, deep, and well-rounded breast gives these fowls their value as table poultry. The notably rounded keel bone that extends well forward helps to build out the foundation for plenty of breast meat, while the strong, full abdomen provides the space for eggs in the female. Bu both the male and female are confined within the demand for moderately full fluff only, while in the Wyandotte considerably more fluff is allowed. Here, again, is the fact that while the Cochin form is allowable in the Wyandotte it must not be present in the Plymouth Rock. Wings of medium size, broad and full at the shoulders, help to spread the hackle and widen the shoulders, giving the strong, broad appearance as the specimen faces one, while close, narrow wings help to give the narrow, inferior appearance, such as is often found on what are called undeveloped specimens. The strong, prominent wing point, or bow, which is well built out with under muscles, adds very much to the appearance of the fowl.

A good, large thigh that is supported by stout, well-proportioned shank of medium length, good feet and toes compose the proper leg for the Plymouth Rock. A long leg, thin shank, and ill-shaped toes are incorrect, for without the proper foundation a fowl of such build as the Plymouth Rock could not have that finished appearance demanded for it.

A FEW POINTS CONCERNING THE FEMALE.

While the general description given above touches upon the form of both male and female, there are some features of the female which require a more special notice. The most important of these is the tail. This should be so carried as to form a continuation of the back. It should not be so elevated as to form an angle in the back, nor should it droop in the least. To give the best appearance to the back, the main tail feathers may spread out at the base, but should come together at the point.

The most striking feature of a well-formed Barred Plymouth Rock female is a beautiful head and neck, which are most difficult to obtain in any approach to perfection. In many instances the head is large and heavy in appearance, and the barring of the neck gives rather a spotted appearance on the surface, which should show true barring. When of proper make-up, the head is nicely formed and well set on the neck; the beak should be short and strong and nicely curved, so as to present a finished appearance; comb should be neat and rather small, but well defined and of suitable proportions to conform to the head; eyes bright and clear, bay in color; neck nicely curved, gradually widening toward the juncture with the shoulders. This graceful head and neck make a most attractive appearance.

The medium length as demanded for back furnishes correct proportions for a graceful sweep or incline of back toward the tail, as described. This description allows the beautiful back formation that should be free from all appearance of a cushion, for the true Plymouth Rock female should be free from cushion on back and have only a slight showing of fluff. While they are required to be well feathered about the abdomen, there should not be a fluffy formation.

Back, breast, and body should be well rounded and full at point of breast; the wings closely set against the body, and strong at shoulder; main tail feathers standing at a slight incline as if they formed the end of the back. They should be so spread at the base as to form a graceful support to the back without causing a too full appearance at point of wing. The under-filling of the tail should be prominent.

The marking of the Barred Plymouth Rock female, when properly distributed, is grace itself; beginning with the close, narrow bars, just back of the comb and gradually broadening and widening as the tail is approached, there is formed what might be called circles of grayish blue when seen under good lights and conditions. Much depends upon the evenness of barring and the well-defined lines between the two colors; for when either encroaches upon the other the greatest beauty is wanting. This combination of light and dark colors creates the so-called blue tint of the Barred Plymouth Rocks. The beauty depends entirely upon the purity of color and the graceful formation of the bars.

The beak and shanks of the female should be true yellow; but it is a fact that many more have dark spots than have the true color. These dark spots come from the early Java cross, no doubt, and will continue with them for years to come. The shank should be strong and well placed, with no inclination to turn in at the hock. They should be wide rather than narrow at this point.

THE BARRED VARIETY.

We have never seen an authentic proof that there is any other native North American fowl than the turkey that has been domesticated. All of our poultry, both land and water fowls, which are classed as domestic poultry, came to us from other lands. Those we have are all the result of careful crossing, mating, and improving. We have always paid the strictest attention to color demands, often at the sacrifice of shape. This is a natural result almost sure to follow close breeding for color. Good, even color of plumage can be procured and maintained in highest perfection only by close line breeding, a natural result being more or less loss of size and good form.

Line breeding, or inbreeding, is an absolute necessity to produce a certain type or color. There is no other way to produce either with any certainty; and, while we are thus guiding our stock into new conditions, we are as surely reducing their size and injuring their shape and vigor. The only sure way to maintain all is to have more than one line of breeding stock, so as to be able to invigorate one by the other with as little injury to color as possible.

Our demand for perfection of color and barring in our Barred Plymouth Rocks has driven all those who produce for exhibition purpose to close line breeding and to the double mating system. These two methods have proved successful for color, but at the same time have not added more grace or better form to the fowls as a breed. In this particular it has been claimed that our Plymouth Rocks have declined. But we may feel assured that the ability of our American breeders will soon remedy this error, and we shall have far better form than before in addition to perfection of color.

The color demand of the standard is bluish gray, barred with narrow, parallel lines of dark blue, approaching almost to a positive black. The barring is to be close in all sections of the body, and on neck and saddle hackle narrower and closer than in other sections. The barring must positively show the entire length of the feathers in all sections when they are not mostly composed of down. In the primaries, secondaries, and feathers of the tail the barring is to be wider than in other sections. The shade of surface color is to be nearly or quite uniform throughout.

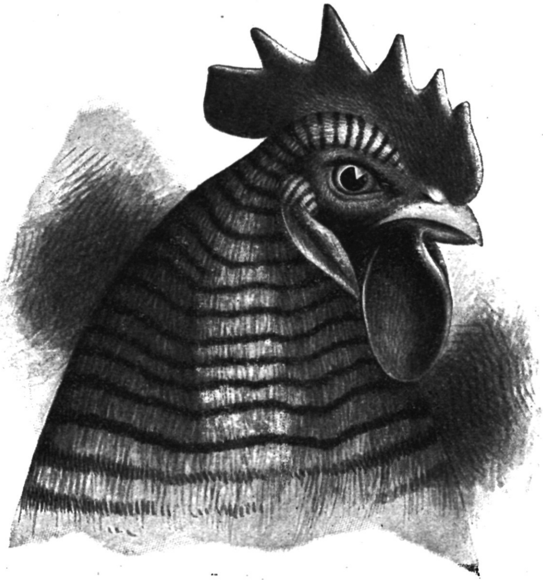


FIG. 4.—Head of Barred Plymouth Rock male.

The most perfect colored Barred Plymouth Rock is one whose color is so perfectly blended as to present to view the attractive blue shade so continually talked of as belonging to them, but so seldom seen in anything like perfection. When the ground color is of a clear bluish gray and the modified blue black, so-called, and the lines between the two shades are clear-cut and distinct, the combination, under proper light, reflects the blue tint which is so desirable in a high-class specimen.

The crowning beauty of the Plymouth Rock is its purity of color. The two-shades, one light and the other dark, must each be pure and true to its color and positively free from any tinge of foreign color. This, to begin with, is the fundamental condition when selecting for proper coloring. When we have this purity of color, perfect surface color is assured.

PROPER BARRING.

There are two very important factors in the problem of barring often passed over without due attention; that is, the narrow and parallel lines of dark blue. The bars must be narrow and straight, those of the neck fine and distinct. Spots on the surface of the neck plumage are not bars. The barring of the neck must entirely cross the feather, barring it just as perfectly as the most perfect feather of the body. Or, in other words, fine lines of the darker color must extend across the light shade, as straight as if made with mechanical precision, from the point of the feather down close to the skin in perfect regularity.

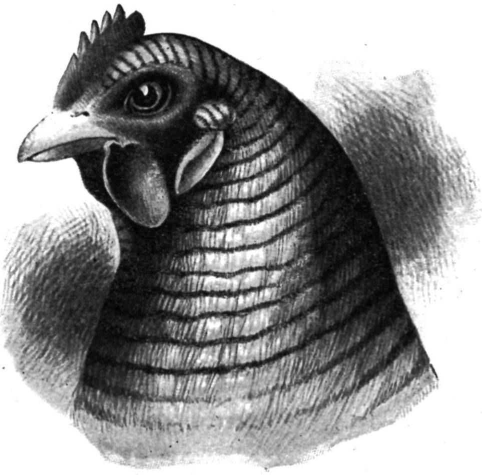


FIG. 5.—Head of Barred Plymouth Rock female.

The lines in the smaller feathers close to the head are the finest, and they grow wider and more pronounced until they reach the lower portion of the hackle, which are about the same as the saddle plumage.

The saddle plumage of the male is another section that has the narrower lines of barring. While these lines are not so fine as in the neck plumage, they conform to one another in their graduation and style of lines. Often the most beautiful barring is present in this section. The prevalent defects found in these sections are the V-shaped bars and the broken lines, where the quill, or shaft of the feather, passes through them. In the latter the line, or bar, on one side of the quill will be its own width higher on the feather than the continuation of the same bar on the other side, thus: ‾+‾‾ __+_. These two defects are quite serious, as they destroy the uniformity of surface bars, which should parallel each other, and, in addition to this, count against them in undercolor.

The body plumage, including breast of both male and female, is barred alike, being broader and more striking than in neck plumage. Each feather usually ends with the darker shade. When this is not the case the specimen is frequently too white for exhibition. It is especially important that the lines in these sections should be very uniform and straight. The dividing line between the light and dark shades must be very sharp and entirely free from bronzy shading.

The back plumage of the male should conform in shade and barring with its own hackle and saddle plumage. While the barring is not so fine, neither should it be so heavy as to look out of place between the two. This portion of the fowl is one of the weakest color sections of the male bird. Metallic black will often show like a network over the back. Both red and bronzy feathers will come to the surface; and here, more than in any other section, is found the white undercolor. All these faults should be absolutely driven out.

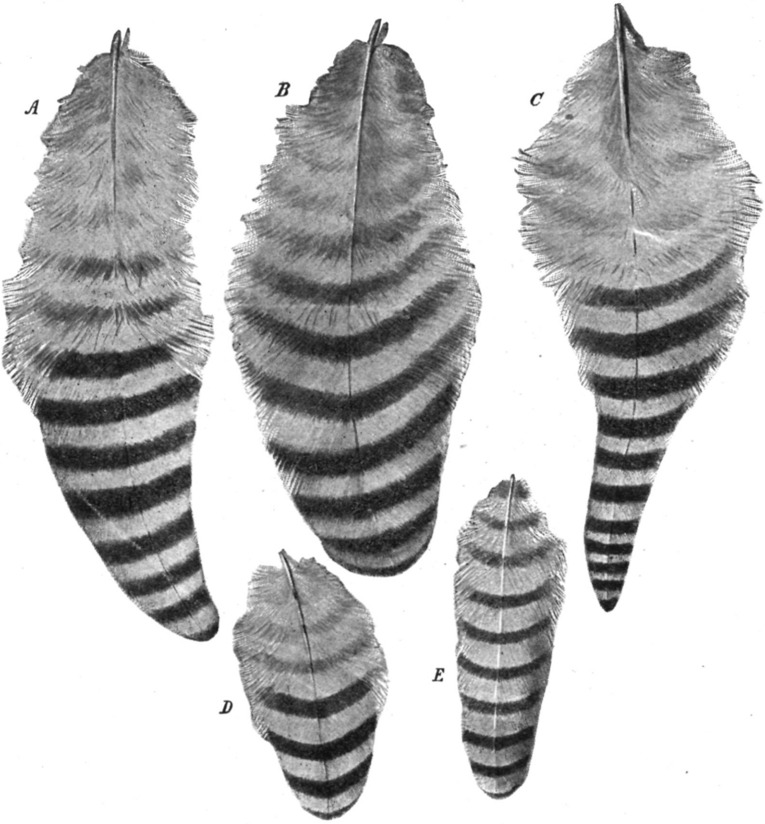


FIG. 6.—Feathers of Barred Plymouth Rock male. *A*, saddle; *B*, fluff; *C*, saddle; *D*, breast; *E*, back.

The main tail feathers of both male and female should have the perfect barring, but should be considerably wider than in any other section. Here, again, is often present the broken bars as shown above, and, being so much broader, they look the more out of place. The clear-colored, regularly barred tail feathers add considerable finish to any specimen, while poor color and irregular barring in the tail feathers, being always in sight, have an unfavorable bearing upon the other sections of the bird. One of the most beautiful effects of plumage comes from a profusion of handsomely marked feathers filling in underneath the tail. This not only vastly improves the general appearance of the fowl, but gives a perfect finish to the tail.

Wing bows of male birds are often defective. Here the barring is often weak and ticked, and the color of the flights of both male and female often have the appearance of gradually merging the one shade into the other. A wing with flights equaling the tail or secondaries in color and barring is quite uncommon, a condition which seems seldom removed.

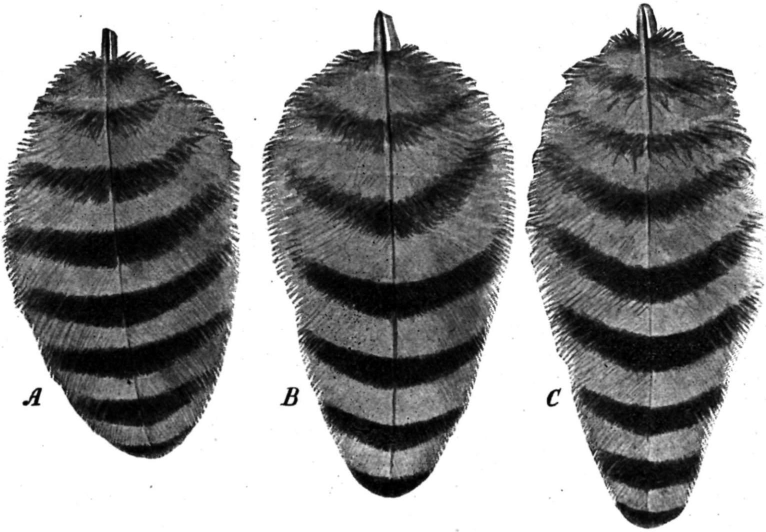


FIG. 7.—Feathers of Barred Plymouth Rock female. *A*, neck; *B*, shoulder; *C*, back.

To sum up the subject of surface color: Whether it be of the very light shade sometimes seen, or much darker, or whatever shade the specimen may be, a uniform shade of color should prevail throughout the fowl. Let it not have a light neck with a dark saddle or back; neither will it do to have one shade on back and saddle, including tail, and another shade on breast. "The shade of surface color must be nearly or quite uniform throughout" to meet the Standard demand.

UNDERBARRING.

The barring must show on the entire length of the feathers in all sections when they are not mostly composed of down. This is the law for undercolor or barring, according to the Standard. Or, in other words, all feathers other than the fluffy feathers that cover the posterior portion of the fowl shall show positive barring to the skin. This with some is taken to mean that the barring of underplumage must be quite as distinct as the surface barring, which is considered erroneous, it not being the intent of the wording of the Standard, as it simply calls for a "barring that positively shows itself the whole length of the feather." In this case a positive showing does not demand the same intensity of color under as upon the surface. While this is the intent of the Standard, at the same time the limited number that has been produced with underbarring approaching the distinctness and perfection of surface barring has attracted the greatest admiration of all who have seen them. Such instances point to this style of barring as being very near to perfection, as gauged by public opinion. If it is possible to produce such intense underbarring and hold the surface color clear and clean-cut, we shall assuredly have an attractive color and style of marking.

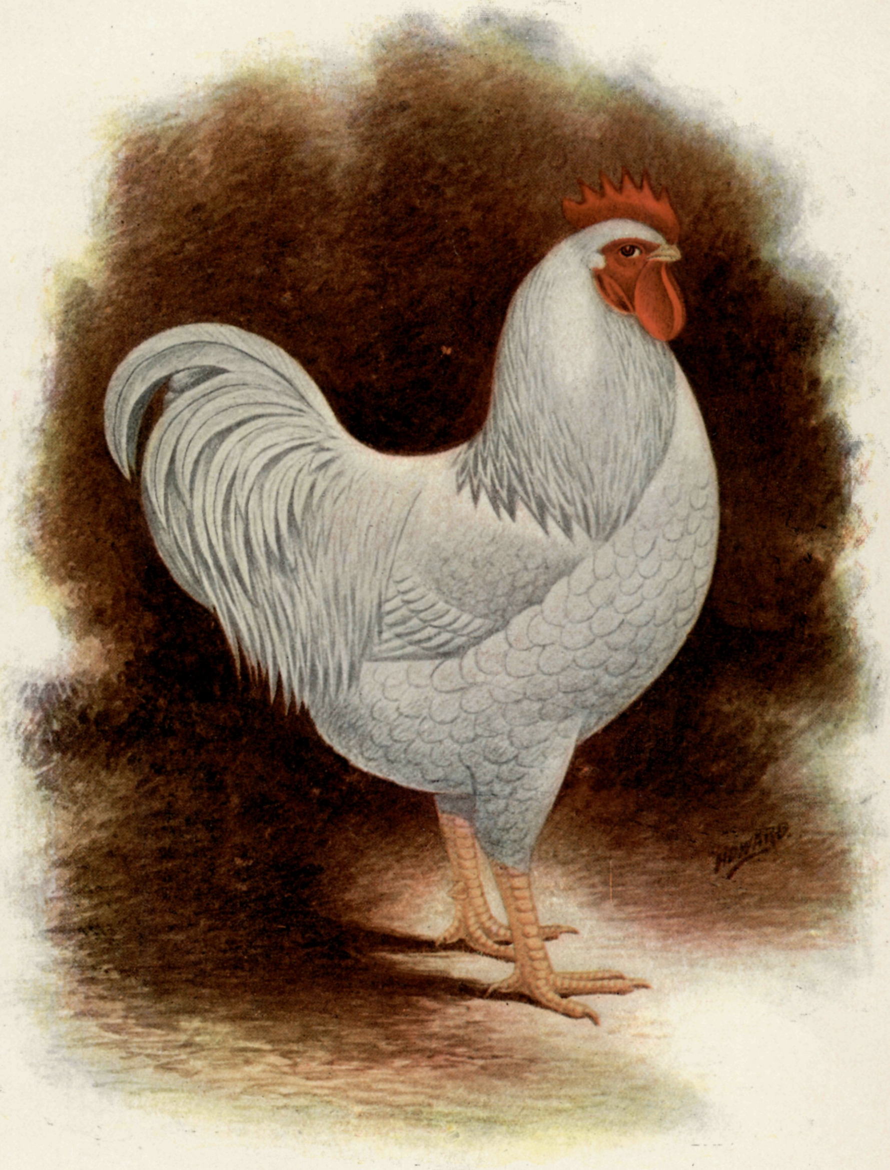
The weak points for underbarring are on the back of both male and female and just forward of the tail of the male. Not very long ago the surface of wing and the plumage of thigh of both male and female were quite deficient, but this is now much improved. The greatest trouble experienced with an excessive underbarring is an injury to surface color. The much barring to the skin carries with it such a predominance of strength in the darker shade as to influence the surface color undesirably and to show the metallic black rather strongly on the males.

When a clear, clean undercolor, nicely barred to the skin, quite plain enough to be readily seen, is obtained, the Standard demand is fulfilled. At the same time the most positive preference is shown, by all who are well informed, for the positive barring, provided it is clear, clean, and regular. Often those who are not fully acquainted with the methods of judging fail to understand why a fowl which fills the Standard demand in undercolor should be discounted as against the one with the better barring. The fact that one has better barring than the other must place it in advance on this point, at least.

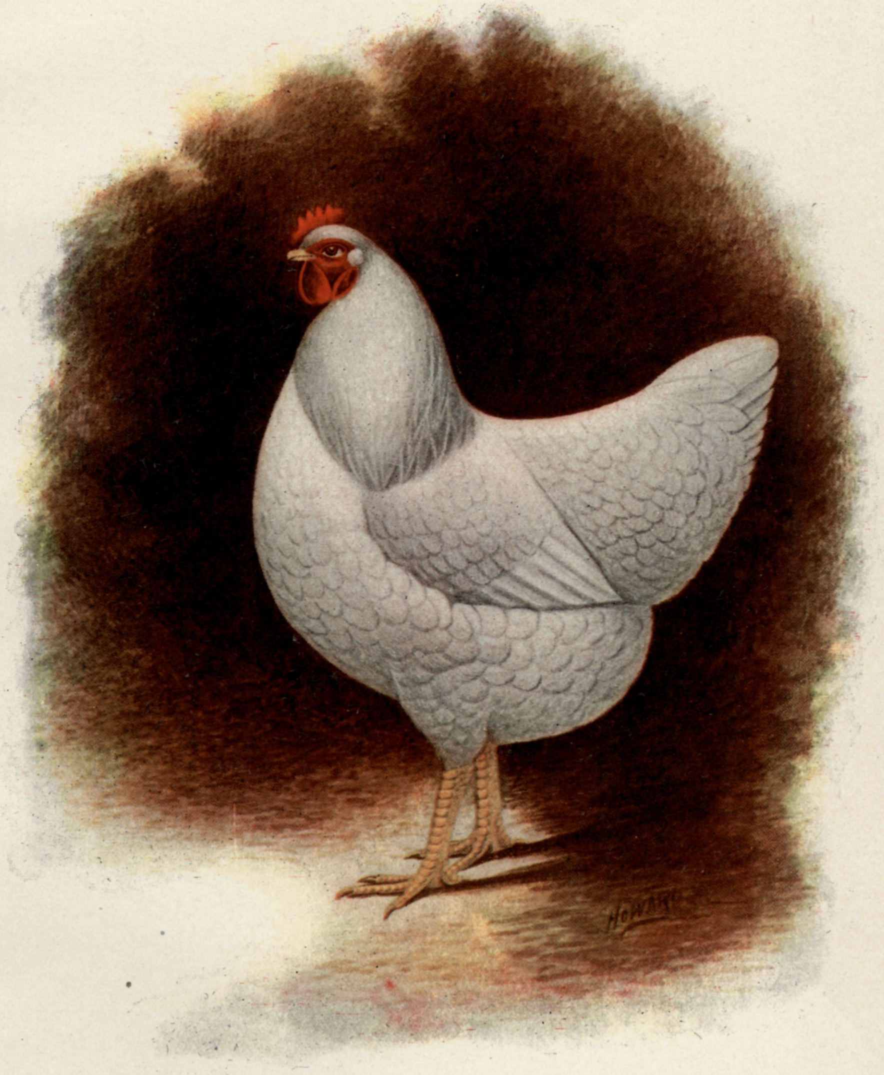
With some, the wing flights are classed as under color, or barring. These are the most difficult to control and to bring within the desired color demand, and few specimens are ever seen that have flights that could be considered within the Standard line. Seldom do we see one in which the lines between the two colors are distinctly drawn. The tendency of the colors to run (as the saying is in the dye shop) seems to invade the flights.

MATINGS.

The formations, as shown in their origin, gives the greater strength of color to the female. The so-called top cross of the lighter-colored male with the darker-colored female still casts its influence toward the



WHITE PLYMOUTH ROCK MALE.



WHITE PLYMOUTH ROCK FEMALE.

too dark female and the too light colored male. This natural condition, it is claimed, renders it quite impossible to produce the proper exhibition color males and females from the same pair. For this reason what is called the double-mating system has come into general use.

There are those who claim to produce exhibition males and females both from the same mating. While this is done to a certain extent, the facts are that by far the greater portion of our best exhibition Barred Plymouth Rocks are produced by the double-mating system. One of our most successful breeders states that each year his single-mating system comes nearer to achieving the same success as has been obtained heretofore from the extreme double matings.

THE SINGLE MATINGS.

When we speak of single matings for producing Barred Plymouth Rocks the possibility of being able to mate a pair, trio, or pen that will produce both males and females of high-class exhibition qualities is implied. If it is possible to select a pair that will produce both males and females of proper Standard color and shape, that have the very desirable surface color and barring, also the requisite amount of undercolor, then we have succeeded on the single-mating system. Until this is accomplished the single-mating method is not a success.

A Standard colored male mated to three or four hens, some of them light in color, some dark, and some medium, might produce both males and females of good quality. But that is not single mating. Single mating, in the strictest sense, is producing both males and females of the highest quality from a single pair. It must be the result of a true single mating of one pair of fowls, not a pen, nor yet a trio.

THE DOUBLE MATING.

This is the selection of what are called pullet-breeding females and mating them with pullet-producing males, for the express purpose of producing exhibition colored pullets; also the selection of cockerel-breeding females and mating them with cockerel-producing males for the purpose of obtaining exhibition cockerels. This is what is known as double mating.

For the production of pullets under this method, select females of perfect Standard color, in barring and underbarring; be careful as to clear, clean-cut barring that is absolutely perfect in all respects, so far as it is possible to obtain it; pay strict attention to the fine, close barring in the neck; see that this is really and properly barred and not marked with broken, or V-shaped, lines. Also look well to the tail, flight, and secondary feathers. Spare no pains in selecting the breeding females, taking only such as will satisfy thoroughly your desire were the same condition of plumage inherited by their future chicks.

With such females place a male of considerably lighter color than they are. Some use very thin-colored males. These very light-colored males with such females as are above described will produce light-colored pullets. Others take what might be called a medium shade and gain the medium color in females. The shade in this way can be partially guided in your pullets. The fact to be borne in mind is that with such females the lighter in color the male used the lighter the pullets will be. No matter what shade of color is preferred, let it be remembered that the male used for producing pullets must be lighter in shade than his mates and that his barring must be as near to perfection as possible. He must be well barred to the skin and free from all tendency toward white undercolor in back. When success in producing high-class exhibition females is attained and a line established that will produce them year after year, the males from these matings are most valuable as pullet breeders.

DOUBLE MATING FOR COCKERELS.

For producing males that will win in strong competition, select fine large females in shades of color considerably darker than Standard color. These females must be entirely free from any bad color. They must have fine, close, regular barring, running to the skin. It is quite useless to hope to produce good males, or in fact good fowls of any kind, from inferior females. Better by far to give all the time and attention to one pair or trio of real meritorious specimens than to hope for success that can never come from inferior stock.

After selecting these darker-colored females, place with them the finest male possible to obtain—one of perfect Standard color, marking, and undercolor. The nearer he comes to perfection in every section, the better will be his sons.

In all these matings, the barrings must be of straight, narrow type; they must be true and distinct in all the specimens used; the light-colored males must be as true in this respect as the darkest female. Each and every specimen must conform to all the demands of the Standard, as well as to the style and manner of barring.

GENERAL DEMANDS.

No fowl of any kind that is not true to its breed characteristics should be used as a breeder. The first requisite to be considered in selecting either a male or a female for these matings is to have present in each specimen a true Plymouth Rock form of the highest degree. It should always be borne in mind that the male largely influences color, while the female gives the size and general formation. A breeder that has a poor comb or deformity of any kind should never be used, and the strictest attention to proper color of eye, earlobe, beak, legs, and toes should be given. By following closely these suggestions and selecting, when it is possible, specimens that have been bred in line for males or females, as the case may be, for years, success in producing high-class Barred Plymouth Rocks should be attained.

WHITE PLYMOUTH ROCKS.

The White Plymouth Rocks are (so-called) sports from the Barred variety. There are two causes found for such a variation in the formation of the breed—first, the Black Java was part of the original foundation stock, and all solid black fowls are apt to occasionally throw white chicks; and, second, the cross of the white Asiatic fowl, for the purpose of enlarging the size, clearing the plumage, and increasing the size of their eggs, might be expected to occasionally crop out in the offspring. It is not surprising, therefore, that white fowls have been occasionally produced; the greatest surprise in their appearance is their good Plymouth Rock form.

THEIR ORIGIN.

About 1875 or 1876 Mr. Oscar F. Frost, of Monmouth, Me., had hatched from eggs laid by Barred Plymouth Rocks some white chicks that grew to be good Plymouth Rocks in shape, but white in color. These are said to have been the first that were ever mentioned up to that time as having made an appearance. As soon as it was admitted that such was the case, others through the country claimed to have had the same experience in their flocks. In almost every case they seemed to come from either the Essex or the Drake strain of birds.

The originator of what was known as the Essex strain of Barred Plymouth Rocks claims to have crossed into his flock a fowl called the White Birmingham. It is claimed by some that this is the true reason for this strain producing white fowls. There was considerable activity in an effort by those who disliked the idea of allowing a white fowl to be called a Plymouth Rock to have them named Birminghams, but the satisfactory establishment of their descent from the Plymouth Rocks, the evidence that they reproduced their qualities, and the presence of as good form as could be shown in the Barred variety secured to them their right to the family name.

When we speak of this variety as a sport from the Barred Rocks, we mean that eggs laid by the Barred variety produced these white specimens, and that this was simply the reappearance of ancestral characters through the action of well-known laws of heredity. It is asserted that it is not an unusual occurrence for some lots of Barred Plymouth Rocks to produce solid or almost solid black fowls. This also might be expected, since there were black as well as white breeds used for foundation stock.

When solid black fowls produce pure white offspring these are called Albinos. This is looked upon as a weakness in color of the parent birds. But when any made breed shows a tendency to "throw back" to any one of its ancestors it is called a reversionary tendency, or the going back to an ancestor. In this case the white specimen took the color of one of its ancestors and held to the shape of its immediate family.

COLOR CONDITIONS.

We must not have the impression that the first of these white sports had good clear color, for they had not. It took several years of great care in mating to get them started toward breeding true. This, however, is not remarkable, since our very oldest known breeds will not breed absolutely true at all times. A new variety could not be expected to do better than those which have been carefully selected for many years.

As the result of patience, skill, and good judgment we now have the White Plymouth Rock, which is of as good form as can be found in the Barred variety. They fully equal them in size, and their color is as pure white as is seen on any fowl. Many of them are pure white in plumage, with beaks, shanks, and feet of beautiful orange yellow, giving the combination of color so popular in this country.

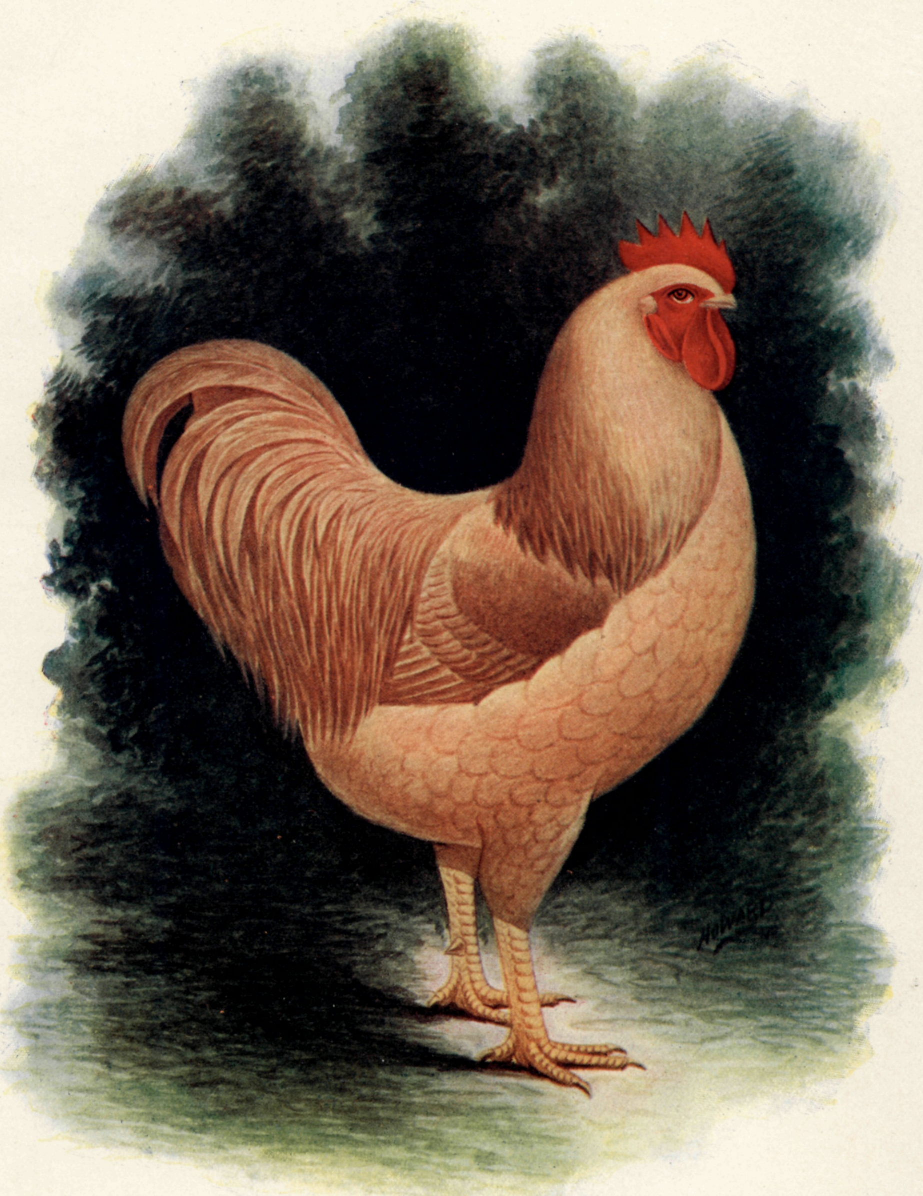
PROPER MATINGS.

As stated before, all Plymouth Rocks, no matter of what variety-color they may be, must have the same shape. There is but the one true Plymouth Rock shape. An effort has been made to state plainly in previous pages just what this should be, and the first and most essential requirement is that all specimens of the white variety that are used for breeding shall be most perfect in Plymouth Rock shape. As there are but two conditions of quality to be considered—good shape and pure color—it is of the greatest importance to have them both as near to perfection as possible.

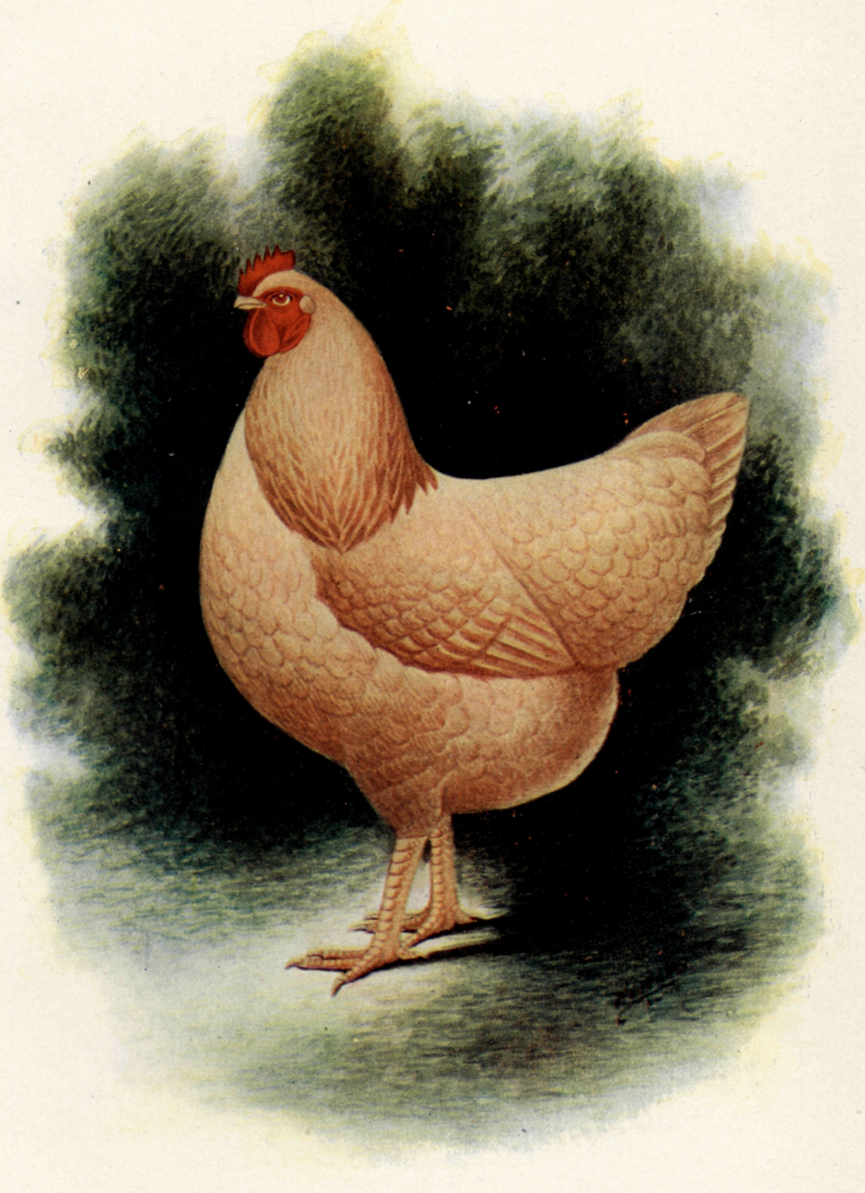
Fine large specimens of most perfect Plymouth Rock shape which are pure white in color and whose head, comb, and eyes are right up to Standard demands are the only kind worth consideration for breeding purposes. With these they must also have a good, richly colored, yellow beak, shanks, and feet. It is simply folly to hope to produce good high-class show specimens from under-sized, ill-shaped, poor-colored specimens. If simply handling them for eggs, select the best egg producers and keep them; but if breeding for exhibition, do not waste time trying to succeed with even fair quality. To succeed it is necessary to have the very best.

WHITE AS A COLOR.

The pure white plumage of a fowl is quite as difficult to obtain in perfection as any of the variety colors; yellowish or creamy tints, also black specks, will show in the feathers of the very best strains. Often



BUFF PLYMOUTH ROCK MALE.



BUFF PLYMOUTH ROCK FEMALE.

when the surface plumage appears white, the undercolor will show the creamy tint. This discoloration is often prevalent in the quills of the wings and tail feathers, also in the back just in front of the tail. The presence of the creamy or yellow tint destroys a specimen for either breeding or exhibition purposes.

White fowls that have this yellowish cast in plumage are usually the most vigorous of the flock, while those that are absolutely pure white are often rather delicate as compared with the others. It is frequently the case that sprinklings of black will be found in parts of the plumage of the whitest specimens. These small spots of black look like sprinklings of pepper on some of the feathers. This most usually shows itself in wing flights or on back plumage. At times solid black feathers will show themselves; usually they crop out on the back or on the body just under the wing bow.

When selecting breeders for market purposes, for both eggs and market poultry, the largest and most vigorous specimens, without regard to yellowish cast in plumage, should be selected. Size, strength, and constitution should be the first consideration for producing stock for eggs, broilers, and market poultry. But when selecting for production of exhibition specimens use only those that are absolutely white to the skin, including quill feathers.

BUFF PLYMOUTH ROCKS.

The whole fraternity of poultry fanciers thought the advent of the new white varieties marked the full tide of success with fowls; but when the facts as to new buff breeds shone upon us, all interested in fancy fowls, to a greater or less extent, went, as might be said, color mad. Even to this day men will argue the question as to the shade of color, and present as samples of true buff color specimens ranging from lemon yellow to snuff brown, some one calling each shade the proper color.

It is acknowledged that there have been two original strains of the Buff Plymouth Rocks—the one called the Wilson strain, the other the Fall River strain. The Wilson strain originated with Mr. J. D. Wilson, of Worcester, N. Y., from Buff Cochins and Light Brahmas. The Fall River strain was produced by Mr. R. G. Buffington, Dr. Aldrich, and others, at Fall River, Mass., by crossing Rhode Island Reds and White Plymouth Rocks; also from selected Rhode Island Reds that had fairly good Plymouth Rock shape and buff color. The Rhode Island Reds selected for this purpose had more or less Plymouth Rock blood in their veins.

These early productions had black tails, dark flights, almost red body color, and very red wing bows. The Wilson strain had the better size and color; the Fall River strain better form. From the union of the two, those interested have produced a fowl that has the true breed characteristics, also good size and color. Few varieties have advanced so fast as these in real quality of both form and feather.

It is not unusual to see male birds of true color, through and through, while in females true color is so common as to be practically established; yet in some cases the color is thin and washy, and in others too deep or too red. But even with these faults their handlers have shown great skill in bringing them to their present condition in so few years, notwithstanding an undercurrent of hereditary forces tending toward many shapes and colors which came through their original make-up.

It can not be too strongly emphasized that all Plymouth Rocks must have the same shape, form, and breed characteristics. That the shape makes the breed is ever true, while color is simply the emblem of the variety. In all solid-colored fowls we have the right to hope for better form than in particolored ones. For this reason we should expect the most perfect Plymouth Rocks in this variety.

In mating these fowls for producing the highest class specimens, first of all select good size, vigor, and Plymouth Rock shape; always looking well to the quality of comb, eyes, wattles, earlobes, beak, shanks, and feet. In addition, have good even color as described below.

BUFF COLOR AND HOW PRODUCED.

The Standard calls for one even shade of true golden buff throughout. This is a most simple proposition that tells us in the plainest possible language that all buff fowls must be a true buff of golden hue; not lemon buff, nor reddish buff; neither shall it be reddish brown nor snuff brown, but true and simple "golden buff" which approaches a true colored chamois skin or one of our American (yellow) gold coins.

With buff fowls, more than those of any other color, the greatest attention must be paid to the color of the male. It is almost a hopeless task to try to produce good true-colored buff chicks from poorly or thin-colored males. The color of the male that is to be used for a breeding fowl should be very true and even—neither thin nor ticked. The color should be filled in very closely and dense, so as to make a strong, solid, true surface color that should be well sustained by undercolor to the skin, a shade or two lighter than surface color, but just as true.

It is erroneous to give undue credit for color qualities to the thin-colored specimens which are so weak in color as to look like a faded-out lemon color, and so thin as to allow the white undercolor (which is usual in such specimens) to show through. Such is not buff color. It has no more right to be called true Standard buff than has the red or snuff-brown shades.

After selecting a true-colored male that has the same even shade of buff all over—allowing for the glossy finish of neck and upper portions of body, including wings, which must be of the same even shade—mate him with the very truest colored females that it is possible to obtain. Always follow this rule if possible: Have the females of the true golden hue of buff as called for in the Standard, while the color of the male's breast plumage should be one or two shades deeper in color than the breast of the females.

Never mate deep red-colored specimens with paler lemon-colored ones. This will bring mixed or mossy surface color. The way to establish good, lasting buff color of the proper shade is to mate good, true buff colors together year after year till this color is thoroughly established in the blood, when it can be depended upon to reproduce itself.

The most constant defects in the buff color are the red that comes on the wing bow, the black that comes on the tail and wings, and the white that comes in the tail, wings, and undercolor. Some one of these is always present. A surplus of black seems to drive the others out. Years of experience have taught those who have bred buff fowls that it is a good plan to confine the black to the tail feathers and to hold just a little of it hidden away in the main tail plumage. This can be done, and it helps to fortify against the white. All specimens having the red wing bows should be discarded and used simply as market poultry.

FAULTS TO AVOID.

By all means keep your Plymouth Rocks up in size. Have them look their character. A small-looking specimen which is so fat as to pass muster underweight demands is simply a heavyweight small bird. Breed them to good size. Have them look to be full-sized Plymouth Rocks. It is the good, reasonable size that is needed—not over fat, so as to weigh in at Standard weights. Poor combs are entirely too prevalent. Pay more attention to all head portions, for they count largely for or against the specimen. All fowls should have good, bright, rich-colored eyes. Nothing detracts more from their beauty than poor shape or poor color of eyes. Stamp out the tendency to feathers on shanks or between the toes. Destroy these by sending all that show the slightest tendency to this defect to be market poultry.

The Rhode Island cross still shows its presence by marking some of the hackle feathers with black. Watch for this continually and get rid of it. Keep clear of all unevenness in color and do not allow the color to run thin and light in shade; at the same time avoid the deep dark shades that properly belong to the Rhode Island Reds. Select the true-shaped, true-colored specimens and hold to them and breed for better results, thus building true and well as the stock advances closer and closer to the line of perfection.

THE PEA-COMBED VARIETY.

One of the results of the many additions of new blood used for improving the Barred Plymouth Rock is a barred fowl with the Pea, or Brahma, comb. Such specimens came from true Plymouth Rock matings, and were fostered by several who believed the style of comb to be of advantage. As to their origin, the words of Mr. H. S. Babcock, who, more than any other person, should have the credit of their origin, are quoted. He writes:

> In searching for its origin the writer has received hundreds of letters showing that in various flocks, at sundry times and in divers places, Pea-Combed chickens have appeared, the parents being single-combed thoroughbred Plymouth Rocks. These fowls were so kept that a cross was impossible, in some cases being the only variety upon the place or in the immediate vicinity. The testimony was simply overwhelming in favor of the assertion that the Pea-Combed birds were just as pure in blood as the single-combed ones, and hence they were regarded as a "sport" of the single-combed Plymouth Rocks. A "sport" they have been called, and perhaps justly, though there appears a possibility of considering them a reversion, for it appears from considerable testimony that the single-combed Barred Plymouth Rocks had in their veins a decidedly mixed blood. For example, Mr. I. K. Felch declared in an article written about the time the Pea-Combed Barred Plymouth Rock was admitted to the Standard that a certain breeder of single-combed Barred Plymouth Rocks, acting upon his advice, had bred into his strain the blood of the Light Brahma, and that when the Light Brahma blood had been reduced to one-eighth, the resulting birds were winners. Again, a prominent breeder of Barred Plymouth Rocks told the writer that he had personally crossed into the original Essex strain a Black-red Pit Game, in order to give more vivacity to the fowls, and then had bred out the strictly Game characteristics. It was also learned that another prominent early strain had in its composition the blood of the Dark Brahma, and it is well known that the Black Java used in the making of the original Plymouth Rocks was an Asiatic fowl, and all Asiatic fowls have a tendency to produce pea combs. Inasmuch as the Brahmas, Light and Dark, are pea-combed fowls, and as Pit Games prodcue all

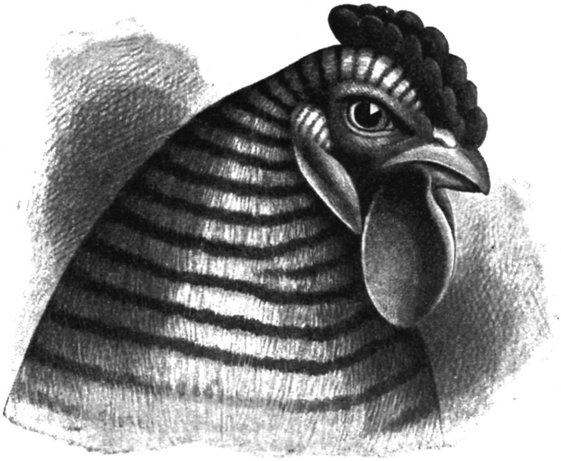


FIG. 8.—Head of Pea-Comb Barred Plymouth Rock male.

manner of combs—single, rose, nub, strawberry, and pea—and as all Asiatics have a tendency toward the production of the pea comb, it is possible that the comb upon the Plymouth Rock is due, not to sporting, which means the production of an entirely new character, one not possessed by any ancester, but to reversion, in this instance affecting the comb only of the fowls. But to one or the other cause (either to sporting or reversion) the pea comb of the Plymouth Rock must be referred, for no immediate cross for its production was ever made. The Pea-Combed Plymouth Rock is as pure in blood as its single-combed ancestor; it is a Plymouth Rock, and nothing else.

In breeding it presents exactly the same problem that the single-combed varieties present—careful mating for color and the preservation of the true Plymouth Rock type. In the barred birds the color problem is a difficult one, but not beyond the skill of a good breeder. In this variety the color demand was not forced by competition to the same high limit. For this reason good show specimens were produced from the single-mating system. If still popular at this time, it would be necessary to use the other system to keep to the present demand.

This variety never became popular as a fancy fowl, but was quite extensively kept for eggs and dressed-poultry purposes, until finally it was admitted that they were far better calculated for utility than for exhibition. This condition caused them to be dropped from the list of standard fowls, and at the present time they are seldom seen outside the confines of poultry farms, where they are much valued for their continual egg yield and quick growth for broilers and market poultry.

BREEDS ALLIED TO THE PLYMOUTH ROCKS.

THE JERSEY BLUE.

Jersey Blues are mentioned as among the very earliest productions of American fowls. They were named after the State from which they originated, and became popular on account of their prolific egg yield. Early records tell us that they are the result of a cross between the Great Malay and some one of our other breeds (name unknown), and that the product was a rather long-legged fowl, neither valued as an egg producer nor as a good market fowl. No doubt this original cross from the Malay had the long legs and inferior egg capacity, both of which belong to the Malay family. Why such a cross should be inferior as table poultry can only be accounted for on the ground of poor care or perhaps a Spanish cross.

The Great Malay of early day did not have the beautiful black-red colors of the present, nor were they the equal in many ways of our present type. As described in their advent, the Jersey Blues were large-sized long-legged fowls, of a bluish cast in plumage, weighing, when full grown, from 12 to 16 pounds per pair. All these facts point to a Malay crossed with either Black Spanish or Java.

Blue fowls, from all time, have come as the result of many crosses: Dark Brahmas crossed with Black Spanish, Minorca crosses, and pure white and pure black fowls, all have produced fowls having blue color in plumage. The entire make-up of the Jersey Blue is similar to that of the Andalusian, which is of Spanish origin, and no doubt the result of crossing a Black and White Spanish fowl, or perhaps two black fowls of different breeds, as it is a well-established fact that either cross may produce a blue specimen.

The present form and color of the Jersey Blue would rather incline one to believe that they are the result of an Asiatic-Java cross. The absence of the white earlobe shuts out the probability of a Spanish cross, while their large, heavy bodies and underformation resemble the Asiatic family. They have dark eyes, single combs, red earlobes, and smooth legs. The color of body plumage of the male is slaty blue, each feather being laced about the edge with a darker color; top plumage, including neck, back, saddle, and wings, a metallic blue-black; main tail feathers should be blue or bluish black; beak, legs, and toes of both male and female dark or slate color.

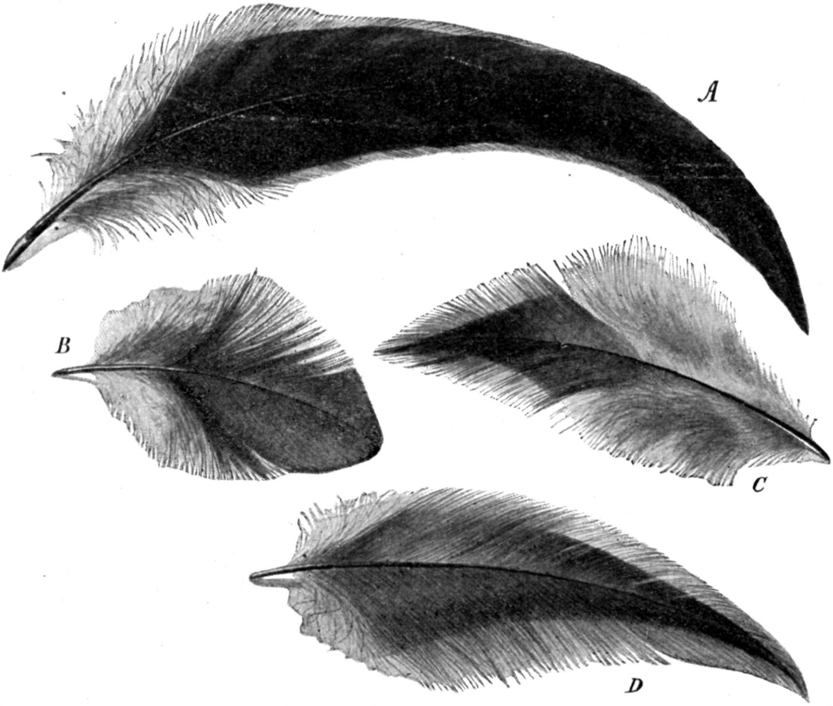


FIG. 9.—Feathers of Jersey Blue male. *A*, tail; *B*, breast; *C*, hackle; *D*, saddle.

The female should be slaty blue in color all over, each feather being laced around the edge with a darker shade (color and lacing like that of the Andalusian); the neck somewhat darker than body color; they are of good size, deep and full in breast and body; not long in legs, rather active. They produce an average number of eggs that are of a brown color (indicating that they are not of Spanish origin), medium in size, good rich flavor. In fact, they are the counterpart of the Andalusian in color and activity, while favoring the Brahma in size and shape of body. Even at this late day they show an inclination occasionally to produce chicks with some feathers on their shanks, suggesting their ancestry.

The Jersey Blue, like the Pea-Combed Plymouth Rock, was formerly allowed a place in our Standard, but so little attention was paid to its improvement that it was thought best to withdraw it from a position among those called Standard fowls and allow it to occupy the place which it so long filled among the utility fowls.

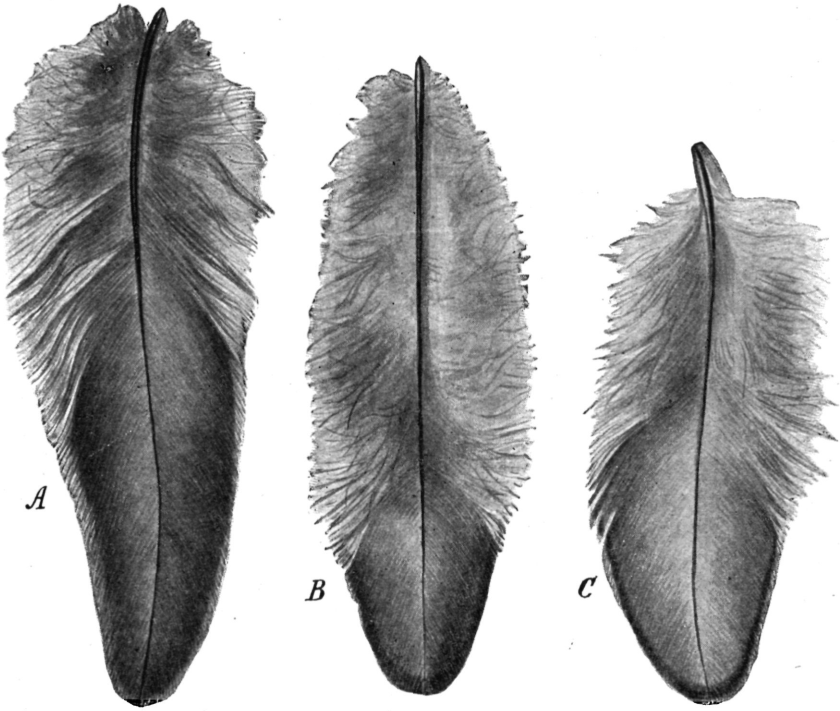


FIG. 10.—Feathers of Jersey Blue female. *A*, neck; *B*, back; *C*, breast.

THE RHODE ISLAND RED.

Few new varieties or breeds of fowls have enjoyed a more quickly gained prominence than has come to the present up-to-date Rhode Island Red. They have been brought into line by breeders known as utility men, who claim for them all requirements that go to make the general-purpose fowl. Yet, withal, we do not think that their ardent admirers claim they will produce any greater number of eggs or better eggs, or that they are any better for market poultry than others of our many American varieties. But if they lack any quality that would go to make them as good as the best it has been successfully hidden by the claims of superiority.

The Rhode Island Red is a result of continued interchanging of male birds for new blood until its present make-up combines about all the best breeds known to this country. Among these are the Malay Game and the early so-called Shanghai, the Dominique, Brown Leghorn, Brahma, Plymouth Rock, and Wyandotte. From time to time all of these have been added by one breeder or another, and specimens produced by these numerous crosses have been exchanged until all the extensive flocks of egg-producing market poultry throughout the State of Rhode Island are more or less of the same type. The Rhode Island Reds in the Fall River districts of Massachusetts have now the greater reputation.

These numerous crosses have many styles of combs, forms of body, and colors of plumage. The facts are that many flocks of these Rhode Island Reds look like the barnyard fowls found so commonly in the West; perhaps a little larger, but no more regular in color of plumage, shape of body, or form of comb. The demand for solid red males with good single combs, to be used in building up the new Buff Plymouth Rocks, prompted the breeding of them to a definite type and color. Since then more care and attention has been given to breeding in accordance with the Standard rules of the Rhode Island Red Club.

The form of the accepted (or club-adopted) Rhode Island Reds favor the Plymouth Rock. They are rather longer in back and the male has considerably more tail plumage. In size they are rather smaller than the Plymouth Rock; in constitutional vigor very strong, and, like all crossbred fowls, grow fast, feather quickly, and begin to lay rather early, for a large fowl. Their qualities are now fairly well transmitted to their offspring.

The adopted shade of color for the true-bred specimen is red for the male and a modified shade of the same color for the female. They range in color from a reddish orange to the deepest possible shade of dark red for the male, while the females range from a dark buff to a snuff brown. Only a small percentage of those produced can be expected to have the exact color of the parent bird. This uncertainty of color transmission, however, has been improved upon each year, and there can be no possible reason why this bird should not be finally guided into true breeding strains.

They have single combs, like the Plymouth Rock, also rose combs like the Wyandotte, and some are produced with the pea comb, like the Brahma. All these colors of plumage and styles of comb may be found of advantage in building up one or more useful varieties of this new breed.

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